

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., said tonight that "President Bush used his State of the Union address as a weapon of mass distraction and ignored the actual imminent threats to our country.

"While sighting our pre-emptive invasion and occupation of Iraq as a lesson that other nation's have learned (e.g., Libya, even though Libya was moving in that direction before the invasion of Iraq, and its economic needs may have been a stronger motivation to cooperate on the question of WMD), the President's words in his SOTU address were a major distraction to the real moral lesson Bush taught our children: 'that the end justifies the means.'

"The call to make tax cuts for the rich and big corporations permanent was a distraction to: the failure of his past tax cuts to create jobs (we've lost 3 million since he came to office); the nation's exploding national debt; our expanding long-term fiscal crisis; and to the tax bill that Mr. Bush is sending to our children and grandchildren.

"On the other hand, the President ignored the real imminent threats to our country:

\*Nearly 20 million Americans unemployed or underemployed, and an official unemployment rate of 10.3% for African Americans;

\*44 million Americans with no health insurance, and no plan to insure every American - with minorities comprising 52% of the nation's year-round uninsured population;

\*Growing poverty in the country, now 12.1% nationally, and rising to nearly 25% in 2004 for African Americans;

\*Growing concerns about public education, while the President under-funded his own domestic priority - the 'No Child Left Behind Act' - by \$9 billion while, on the other hand, using public dollars to fund vouchers to private and parochial schools that can discriminate;

\*With no solution offered to the fiscal crisis that's confronting 45 of the 50 states that are in deficit; and

\*While President Bush wants to make 'national security' his issue in the 2004 campaign -using 'fear' to scare the American people into voting for him - we are still vulnerable because he is more concerned about giving no-bid contracts to his corporate friends, than adequately protecting our borders, providing enough money to inspect boats in our ports, fully equipping and training first responders, improving our domestic nuclear security, and protecting our communities against a bio-terrorist attack," Jackson concluded.